

Utah Department of Environmental Quality Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste Fact Sheet



SEPTEMBER 1999

HEALTH RISK ASSESSMENT UPDATE

at the Tooele Chemical Agent Disposal Facility, Utah

WHY DO RISK ASSESSMENT?

The purpose of the risk assessment for the Tooele Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (TOCDF) is to answer the question: Are the emissions from the TOCDF safe? The *Screening Risk Assessment*, which was issued in February 1996, concluded that emissions from the TOCDF would be safe¹.

WHY ARE UPDATES NECESSARY?

The risk assessment is a prediction of the future and therefore must rely on assumptions regarding emission rates and exposures. Changes to these assumptions require that the risk assessment be updated.

Emission Rates

The Screening Risk Assessment relied on emission data collected from a similar facility to estimate emissions for the TOCDF. Later, test burns² were conducted at the TOCDF to measure actual emissions for each furnace. The measured emissions were then compared to the estimates used in the Screening Risk Assessment.

Dioxin-like chemicals³ were a group of chemicals that the Screening Risk Assessment identified as being of particular concern because of their high toxicity. Only a few dioxin-like chemicals were detected during

the TOCDF trial burns. Dioxin emissions were at least 20 times lower than estimated in the Screening Risk Assessment. For most other chemicals, emissions were also lower. The emissions measured during the TOCDF trial burns indicate that emissions from the TOCDF are safer than predicted by the Screening Risk Assessment.

Exposure

A person's exposure to emissions from the TOCDF is highly dependent on that person's lifestyle. For instance, if homegrown vegetables were contaminated, only people who eat homegrown vegetables are affected. The Division collects and evaluates information on local lifestyle habits to ensure that all potential exposures are considered. The information collected to date supports that the emissions from the TOCDF are safe.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The Division will continue to update the risk assessment as new information becomes available. Some changes to the operating permit may affect the emission rates. Impacts to the health risk assessment are considered before the Division approves any changes to the operating permit.

The Division anticipates publishing a risk assessment for each chemical agent campaign (GB, VX, and mustard⁴). In addition, the Division will publish a new risk assessment whenever the existing risk assessments can no longer answer the question: Are the emissions from the TOCDF safe? Like the Screening Risk Assessment, the published documents will be available for public review and comment.

Additional Information

This fact sheet is a summary of the TOCDF risk assessment updates. If you would like more detailed information or have questions please contact:

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¹ See Health Risk Assessment Fact Sheet

² See Test Burn Fact Sheet

³ See Dioxin Fact Sheet

⁴ See Chemical Munitions Fact Sheet